

Message Text

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ORIGIN SS-25

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EXDIS FOR ATHERTON FROM NEA

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PBOR, MOPS, MILL, LE, IS, US

SUBJECT: SOUTH LEBANON: NEXT STEPS

1. RECOMMEND THAT CABLE ALONG FOLLOWING LINES BE SENT
ACTION TO TEL AVIV AND BEIRUT, INFO JERUSALEM, AMMAN,
DAMASCUS AND CAIRO.

2. BEGIN TEXT:

THE LATEST SERIES OF CABLES FROM TEL AVIV, JERUSALEM AND
BEIRUT (TEL AVIV 7698, 7642; JERUSALEM 1600; USDAO IR-6-157;
BEIRUT 5043) SUGGESTS A LOGICAL STRATEGY WE MIGHT FOLLOW
IN THE DAYS AHEAD. THE FACT THAT WEIZMAN APPARENTLY HAS
NOW AGREED THAT THERE SHOULD BE BASICALLY TWO PHASES--THE
FIRST BEING PLO/FATAH WITHDRAWAL AND THE INTRODUCTION OF
LEBANESE ARMY, AND THE SECOND BEING POLITICAL AND MILITARY
DISCUSSIONS ON SUCH ISSUES AS FURTHER WITHDRAWAL OF PLO/
FATAH--IS IMPORTANT. IF THE ISRAELIS COULD BE KEPT TO AN
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UNDERSTANDING OF THIS KIND, IT MAY BE POSSIBLE FOR THE
PALESTINIAN WITHDRAWALS AND THE INSERTION OF LEBANESE
TROOPS TO TAKE PLACE AT AN EARLY MOMENT AND IN ADVANCE OF
FULL UNDERSTANDING BETWEEN THE ISRAELIS AND LEBANESE ON
OTHER ISSUES. AT THE SAME TIME, WE MUST URGE BOTH PARTIES
TO MEET EARLIER THAN THE LEBANESE HAD BEEN THINKING OF

(OCTOBER 12). WE MIGHT ALSO URGE AT SOME STAGE THE
LEBANESE TO INSERT INTO THEIR DELEGATION ANOTHER REPRE-
SENTATIVE WHO COULD PERHAPS TALK MORE FREELY ABOUT THE

PRAGMATIC UNDERSTANDINGS THAT MIGHT BE DEVELOPED WITH REGARD TO THE GOOD FENCE AND THE FATE OF CHRISTIAN

MILITIA COMMANDERS. (AMBASSADOR PARKER HERE IS THINKING ABOUT URGING BOUTROS TO APPOINT SOMEONE LIKE SAMI KHATIB.) WHILE IN THE END IT WOULD BE BETTER TO HAVE ISRAELI-LEBANESE MEETINGS WITHOUT UN REPS PRESENT IF THE ISRAELIS REMAIN ADAMANTLY AGAINST SUCH PARTICIPATION, WE BELIEVE WE SHOULD URGE ISRAELI ACQUIESCENCE IN A UN PRESENCE FOR THE MOMENT SINCE THERE CONCEIVABLY COULD BE WAYS IN WHICH UN FORCES COULD BE HELPFUL, FOR EXAMPLE, WITH REGARD TO GOOD FENCE ARRANGEMENTS, AS HINTED IN GENERAL KHOURY'S COMMENTS (USDAO BEIRUT IR 6157 DTG 071743Z). AN ADDED REASON FOR UN PRESENCE IS THAT WE CAN SECURE FROM UN SOURCES A DISPASSIONATE ACCOUNT OF THE MEETINGS. FINALLY, THE ISRAELIS WILL HAVE TO BE MADE TO UNDERSTAND THAT THERE ARE LIMITS--WHICH WE WOULD DEFEND--TO FORCING ANOTHER SOVEREIGN GOVERNMENT TO ACCEPT DICTATION OVER THE WAY IT DEPLOYS ITS OWN TROOPS WITHIN THE CONFINES OF ITS OWN RECOGNIZED TERRITORY.

3. FOR AMBASSADOR LEWIS: PLEASE MAKE THE FOLLOWING MAJOR POINTS AS SOON AS FEASIBLE WITH WEIZMAN (AND WITH BEGIN AT SECRET

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YOUR DISCRETION);

-- WE ARE RELIEVED THAT WEIZMAN HAS AGREED THAT THERE SHOULD BE A TWO-PHASE APPROACH, WITH THE FIRST INVOLVING PALESTINIAN WITHDRAWAL AND THE INTRODUCTION OF LEBANESE ARMY UNITS, AND THE SECOND BEING FURTHER LEBANESE-ISRAELI DISCUSSIONS ON SUCH ISSUES AS A MORE EXTENSIVE PALESTINIAN WITHDRAWAL. WE ARE COMMUNICATING THIS UNDERSTANDING TO THE LEBANESE IN ADVANCE OF THE NEXT ISRAELI-LEBANESE MEETING. FOR OUR PART, WE CONSIDER IT CRITICALLY IMPORTANT THAT THE PALESTINIAN WITHDRAWAL COMMENCE AS SOON AS POSSIBLE. SINCE THE LEBANESE HAVE BEEN READY TO SEND IN TROOPS AS EARLY AS OCTOBER 12, AND HAVE ALREADY BEGUN SENDING SMALL DETACHMENTS TO TAKE OVER CASERNES IN THE SOUTH, IT IS ONLY LOGICAL THAT THE FIRST AGENDA ITEM IN THE NEXT LEBANESE-ISRAELI MEETING BE THE DETAILS OF THE WITHDRAWAL-DEPLOYMENT.

--ISRAEL MUST RECOGNIZE THAT THERE WILL BE NO PALESTINIAN WITHDRAWAL BEYOND THE LITANI IN THE ABSENCE OF AT LEAST REASONABLE SUCCESS IN THE CURRENT STAGE, WHICH THE LEBANESE TELL US THE PLO HAS AGREED TO CARRY OUT.

-- WE ARE TOTALLY UNABLE TO UNDERSTAND WEIZMAN'S INSISTENCE THAT LEBANESE ARMY UNITS CANNOT BE PUT INTO THE SOUTH PRIOR TO THE BEGINNING OF PALESTINIAN WITHDRAWALS. WE HAVE INDEPENDENTLY URGED THE LEBANESE TO

MOVE AHEAD RAPIDLY WITHOUT CROSSING ALL THE T'S AND DOTTING ALL THE I'S, IN PART DUE TO ISRAELI HOPES THAT THE PALESTINIANS WILL WITHDRAW AS SOON AS POSSIBLE. AT THE SAME TIME, HOWEVER, WE EXPECTED THAT LEBANESE WOULD DESCRIBE THEIR TIMETABLES AND OTHER ARRANGEMENTS FULLY TO ISRAELIS. THE LEBANESE HAVE TO HAVE SOME DISCRETION IN HOW THEY POSITION THEIR FORCES IN PREPARATION FOR PUTTING THEM INTO EVACUATED AREAS. THEY ARE THE ONES WITH THE BURDEN OF NEGOTIATING PRACTICAL ARRANGEMENTS

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WITH THE PALESTINIANS FOR WITHDRAWAL, AND TIMING MAY BE AN IMPORTANT CONSIDERATION. IF THE PALESTINIANS SUSPECT THAT THERE WILL BE A LENGTHY TIME LAPSE BETWEEN THEIR WITHDRAWAL AND THE INTRODUCTION OF LEBANESE ARMY TROOPS, THEY MIGHT WELL FEAR THAT THE CHRISTIAN MILITIAS WILL TAKE MILITARY ADVANTAGE. THE ISRAELIS ARE NOT GOING TO BE ABLE TO FINE-TUNE EVERY ASPECT OF WHAT MIGHT WELL BE AN UNTIDY SITUATION, HIGHLY DANGEROUS FOR THE DEPLOYING LEBANESE ARMY UNITS. OUR LATEST INFORMATION FROM BEIRUT INDICATES THAT THE LEBANESE MAY HAVE ALREADY BEGUN TO INTRODUCE THREE UNITS OF 50 MEN EACH INTO WHAT IS TECHNICALLY SOUTH LEBANON TO TAKE OVER CASERNES, ALTHOUGH NOT INTO THE TEN KILOMETER ZONE.

-- OUR OWN UNDERSTANDING IS THAT, AS THE ISRAELIS WISH, LEBANESE UNITS WILL BE INTRODUCED INTO AREAS EVACUATED BY THE PALESTINIANS SIMULTANEOUSLY OR ALMOST IMMEDIATELY THEREAFTER IN SOME CASES, AND PERHAPS LATER IN OTHERS. THE LEBANESE, WE BELIEVE, ARE PREPARED TO COMMUNICATE SUCH DETAILS TO THE ISRAELIS IN THE MEETINGS UNDER ILMAC.

-- AS FOR UN REPRESENTATIVES BEING PRESENT AT SUCH MEETINGS, THIS IS A MATTER TO BE WORKED OUT BETWEEN THE ISRAELIS AND THE LEBANESE. OUR VIEW, HOWEVER, IS THAT UN ATTENDANCE COULD BE USEFUL TO ISRAEL. FOR ISRAEL'S CONFIDENTIAL INFORMATION, WE HAVE RECEIVED HINTS FROM THE LEBANESE THAT THEY MIGHT BE PREPARED TO LIVE WITH GOOD FENCE GATEWAYS LEFT OPEN WITH A UN ROLE ON THE LEBANESE SIDE. THIS KIND OF LEBANESE THINKING, WHICH SHOULD NOT BE MENTIONED TO THEM, COULD LEAD TO THE PRAGMATIC UNDERSTANDINGS ON THESE DELICATE ISSUES WE HAVE BEEN URGING THE LEBANESE TO DEVELOP IN THEIR NEGOTIATIONS WITH THE ISRAELIS.

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-- AS FOR WEIZMAN'S REQUEST FOR U.S. ASSURANCES THAT THE LEBANESE WILL COME TO THE NEXT MEETING AND SAY THAT THE PLO HAS OR WILL START WITHDRAWING IMMEDIATELY, WE HAVE

FELT ALL ALONG THAT THIS SHOULD BE THE FIRST ORDER OF BUSINESS. THE LEBANESE SHOULD PROVIDE THE PROPOSED TIME-TABLE FOR THE PALESTINIAN WITHDRAWAL AND OTHER DETAILS CONCERNING THE DEPLOYMENT OF LEBANESE TROOPS INTO THE AREA.

-- WE AGREE WITH THE ISRAELIS THAT THE LEBANESE GOVERNMENT SHOULD TRY TO GET IN DIRECT TOUCH--POSSIBLY BY RADIO--WITH THE CHRISTIAN MILITIA COMMANDERS. WE WILL URGE THE LEBANESE TO DO SO.

-- AS FOR ISRAELI INTELLIGENCE REPORTS THAT SYRIAN TROOPS WILL BE INTRODUCED IN THE GUISE OF LEBANESE TROOPS, GENERAL KHOURY HAS ASSURED US BOTH IN WASHINGTON AND IN BEIRUT ON NUMEROUS OCCASIONS THAT THESE ALLEGATIONS ARE UNTRUE. WE HAVE NO INTELLIGENCE TO CONTRADICT HIS ASSURANCES.

-- WHILE WE APPRECIATE ISRAEL'S CONCERNS OVER THE SITUATION, THERE ARE PRACTICAL LIMITS TO HOW FAR AND HOW RAPIDLY ISRAEL CAN PRESS A FRAGILE LEBANESE GOVERNMENT TO BEHAVE EXACTLY THE WAY THE ISRAELIS WOULD WISH. TO TAKE A PRACTICAL EXAMPLE, THE CONFESSIONALLY MIXED DELEGATION WHICH ATTENDED THE FIRST SESSION WITH THE ISRAELIS WAS DESIGNED TO AVOID THE IMPRESSION--IF THE FACT OF THE TALKS LEAKED OUT--THAT IT WAS A DEAL COOKED UP ONLY BETWEEN THE CHRISTIAN LEADERS IN THE LEBANESE GOVERNMENT (KHOURY, SARKIS AND BOUTROS) AND THE ISRAELIS IN ORDER TO ADVANCE CHRISTIAN INTERESTS IN SOUTHERN LEBANON. WE URGE THE ISRAELIS TO APPROACH THE NEXT TALKS WITH SOME FOREBEARANCE FOR LEBANESE PRIDE AND SENSE OF SOVEREIGNTY,
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RECOGNIZING THAT SENSITIVE POLITICAL ISSUES WILL HAVE TO BE DECIDED IN THE END BY THE POLITICIANS IN BEIRUT, AND NOT BY THE EMISSARIES.

-- ISRAEL KNOWS THAT THE U.S. HAS A STRONG INTEREST IN REINFORCING THE CREDIBILITY AND AUTHORITY OF THE SARKIS GOVERNMENT. WE ASSUME THAT THE ISRAELIS SHARE THIS INTEREST. WE WILL DO OUR BEST, AS WE PROMISED, TO URGE THE LEBANESE TO WORK OUT ARRANGEMENTS WHICH WILL MEET THE PRINCIPAL ISRAELI CONCERNS, BUT THERE MAY BE PRACTICAL LIMITS.

4. FOR CHARGE LANE: PLEASE GET IN TOUCH WITH SARKIS, OR IN YOUR DISCRETION AL-HOSS OR KHOURY, AS SOON AS POSSIBLE TO MAKE THE FOLLOWING MAJOR POINTS:

,--THE ISRAELIS HAVE SHARED WITH US SOME OF THEIR IMPRESSIONS OF THE FIRST LEBANESE-ISRAELI MEETING UNDER ILMAC AUSPICES. WE BELIEVE THERE ARE RISKS THAT SOME

MISUNDERSTANDINGS COULD BE DEVELOPING AS REGARDS THE RESPECTIVE VIEWS OF EACH GOVERNMENT ABOUT THE POSITION OF THE OTHER. THE ISRAELIS ARE PREPARED TO HAVE A SECOND MEETING AS EARLY AS MONDAY, OCTOBER 10, AND WE BELIEVE THE LEBANESE SHOULD TRY TO MEET THAT SCHEDULE ALSO INSTEAD OF WAITING UNTIL OCTOBER 12 OR LATER, SO THAT ANY MISUNDERSTANDINGS CAN BE CORRECTED.

-- WE ARE URGING THE ISRAELIS TO DEAL WITH FIRST THINGS FIRST IN DISCUSSIONS WITH THE LEBANESE, AND THEY FINALLY HAVE AGREED THAT THERE COULD BASICALLY BE A TWO-STAGE APPROACH FOR THE TIME BEING. THE FIRST WOULD INVOLVE THE WITHDRAWAL OF THE PALESTINIANS AND THE INTRODUCTION OF THE LEBANESE ARMY. IN THE SECOND STAGE, VARIOUS OTHER POLITT-SECRET

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CAL-MILITARY ISSUES MIGHT BE EXAMINED IN THE ISRAELI-LEBANESE MEETINGS. ISRAEL AT THIS TIME APPEARS KEENLY INTERESTED IN GETTING THE PALESTINIAN WITHDRAWAL STARTED, AND THIS FITS IN WITH LEBANESE OBJECTIVES ALSO.

-- WHILE THE FIRST MEETING MAY HAVE BEEN INCONCLUSIVE, WE URGE THE LEBANESE TO ARRIVE FOR THE SECOND WITH DETAILS ON THE TIMING, LOGISTICS, AND OTHER ARRANGEMENTS PERTAINING TO THE PALESTINIAN WITHDRAWAL AND INTRODUCTION OF LEBANESE TROOPS. FOR OUR PART, WE WILL URGE THE ISRAELIS TO ACCORD THIS MATTER TOP PRIORITY IN THE MEETING.

-- THE ISRAELIS APPEAR PARTICULARLY SENSITIVE TO THE POSSIBILITY THAT LEBANESE ARMY UNITS WILL BE INTRODUCED INTO THE AREA IN ADVANCE OF THE PALESTINIAN WITHDRAWAL. IN OUR OPINION, THIS IS A MISUNDERSTANDING OF THE LEBANESE POSITION AS WE KNOW IT, AND THE LEBANESE SHOULD CORRECT THIS IN DISCUSSIONS WITH THE ISRAELIS.

-- THE ISRAELIS SAY THEY DO NOT WANT UN REPRESENTATIVES PRESENT IN THESE MEETINGS. FOR OUR PART, WE HOPE THAT THEY CAN REMAIN, WHILE RECOGNIZING THIS IS BASICALLY AN ISSUE FOR THE ISRAELIS AND LEBANESE TO WORK OUT.

-- THE ISRAELIS ARE NOW INDICATING THAT THEY MAY NOT BE ABLE TO CONTROL THE CHRISTIAN MILITIAS IN EVERY RESPECT DURING THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE SHTAURA AGREEMENT AND HAVE SUGGESTED THAT THE LEBANESE TRY TO GET IN DIRECT TOUCH WITH HADDAD. AT SOME STAGE, WE ALSO FEEL THIS WILL BE DESIRABLE AND UNDERSTAND THAT THERE IS A RADIO LINK WITH THE CHRISTIAN MILITIAS WHICH MIGHT BE USED IF LEBANESE GOVERNMENT REPS CANNOT OTHERWISE GET TO MARJAYUN.

-- AT A RELATIVELY EARLY STAGE ALSO, WE HOPE THAT THE LEBANESE DELEGATION COULD BE AUTHORIZED TO COMMUNICATE SOME PRAGMATIC UNDERSTANDINGS TO THE ISRAELIS OVER THE

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SENSITIVE ISSUES THAT CONCERN THEM, SUCH AS THE GOOD
FENCE AND THE FATE OF THE CHRISTIAN MILITIA COMMANDERS.
WE RECOGNIZE THAT THESE ARE MATTERS FOR THE SOVEREIGN
DECISION OF THE LEBANESE GOVERNMENT. REALISTICALLY,
HOWEVER, SOME INFORMAL INDICATION TO THE ISRAELIS OF
THE DIRECTION OF LEBANESE THINKING MIGHT ADVANCE PROGRESS
ON THE MAJOR OBJECTIVE OF A PALESTINIAN WITHDRAWAL AND
THE ASSERTION OF CENTRAL GOVERNMENTAL AUTHORITY IN THE
SOUTH. CHRISTOPHER

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